overheard by a powerful and sympathetic audience of fellow doctors. As this government fails to realize either the original plans or the spirit of the Asylum, Workman's arguments affect his presentation and construction of mental illness and vice versa in what could be aptly described as a long, increasingly complicated, and steadily deteriorating dialectic between literal and figurative constructions of disease. Workman's unusual articulateness, his prominence in Toronto, and the peculiar circumstances of the Toronto Asylum make his reports an unusually rich and dramatic narrative of a process that begins with pleas for completion in the 1850s and ends with veiled recommendations that it be demolished in the 1870s.

Epidemics and Heroics

In his very first report (1853-54), Workman narrates the `cleansing' of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum upon his taking charge. Its symbolic nature is apparent; the new doctor takes charge of his Asylum and rids it of the plague. He very dramatically emphasizes the extent of the pollution: every `apartment' has been infiltrated by the `foul air'. It is coextensive with the vast building itself. The source of this `mass of filth and impure fluids' (4) remains mysterious: `some undiscovered cause'. It sickens the `Visiting Commissioners' and others who `chanced to inhale it' (4).

The building is an institution literally and figuratively characterized by human waste; sinking into the accumulated excrement -- `three to five feet in depth' (4) -- of its inhabitants. The cause of the pollution does not become apparent until well into the report, as if Workman had wanted to build suspense, to emphasize his role by withholding the solution of the crisis, and to delay stating a cause that he knew would dissipate any further theatrics with an element of bathos:

> a defect in the deep drainage, of a most unaccountable character. The interior drains from the kitchens, laundries, and other parts, being followed from their sources to the points of emergence from the building, were here found to be further impenetrable, having never been carried out to the main sewer, which was at the short distance of 22 feet. The